

DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 428 978

SO 028 338

AUTHOR Schnell, Jim
 TITLE Understanding a Spiritual Youth Camp as a Consciousness Raising Group: The Effects of a Subculture's Communication.
 PUB DATE 1996-00-00
 NOTE 28p.
 PUB TYPE Reports - Descriptive (141)
 EDRS PRICE MF01/PC02 Plus Postage.
 DESCRIPTORS *Camping; Communication (Thought Transfer); *Consciousness Raising; Cross Cultural Studies; Group Dynamics; Interpersonal Competence; Recreational Activities; Religion; *Religious Education; *Self Concept; Sensitivity Training; Social Attitudes; *Social Support Groups; Socialization; Subcultures; *Values Clarification; Youth Agencies

ABSTRACT

This paper defines a spiritual youth camp as a consciousness raising group. The camp, founded in 1956 as a community church camp, has been independent of any religious denomination since disassociating from the founding community church in 1986. Communication processes are described as they relate to primary aspects of the camp experience. Primary aspects include the role of religion, utopian influences, self-examination, effects of the camp founders/directors, diversity, and camp activities. (Author/EH)

 * Reproductions supplied by EDRS are the best that can be made *
 * from the original document. *

Understanding a Spiritual Youth Camp as a Consciousness Raising
Group: The Effects of a Subculture's Communication.

by Jim Schnell

SO 028 338

For more information, contact the
ERIC Document Supply Center
ED 428 978

James A. Schnell

1

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
Office of Educational Research and Improvement
EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION
CENTER (ERIC)

- ☒ This document has been reproduced as received from the person or organization originating it.
- ☐ Minor changes have been made to improve reproduction quality.
- Points of view or opinions stated in this document do not necessarily represent official OERI position or policy.

UNDERSTANDING A SPIRITUAL YOUTH CAMP AS A CONSCIOUSNESS
RAISING GROUP: THE EFFECTS OF A SUBCULTURE'S COMMUNICATION

Jim Schnell, Ph.D.
Associate Professor
Ohio Dominican College

614-251-4581

Abstract

This article defines a spiritual youth camp as a consciousness raising group. The camp, founded in 1956 as a community church camp, has been independent of any religious denomination since disassociating from the founding community church in 1986. Communication processes are described as they relate to primary aspects of the camp experience. Primary aspects include the role of religion, utopian influences, self-examination, effects of the camp founders/directors, diversity, and camp activities.

UNDERSTANDING A SPIRITUAL YOUTH CAMP AS A CONSCIOUSNESS
RAISING GROUP: THE EFFECTS OF A SUBCULTURE'S COMMUNICATION

This article will describe and analyze a spiritual youth camp that has met one week each summer since it was founded in 1955. The camp began as an outreach ministry of a community church in Columbus, Ohio in 1955, but in 1986 it separated from the church and became an independent entity. It presently is an interdenominational/interracial camp, with over 40 churches represented, that meets at Tar Hollow State Park in southern Ohio (campers come from all over Ohio and surrounding states). The author has attended each summer since 1966.

An overall objective of the camp is to provide a setting for the camper (ages are 6th grade thru high school graduate) to have a spiritual experience that can serve as a means for greater self-awareness and appreciation for their self potential. The present camp logo is C.A.M.P. (Constructing Assured and Motivated People). The camp session generally includes about 180 campers and 40-50 staff (counselors, cooks, & support staff).

No religious denomination is promoted and the religious background of camp participants (campers & staff) is varied. The lack of denominational influence is most likely due to the camp being founded through an outreach ministry of an interdenominational community church. Most sessions will usually have a visiting minister for the week but some sessions will have no ministerial staff. Such visiting

clergy have included religious leaders from a variety of faiths such as Jewish, Catholic, Congregational, Community, Disciples of Christ, Church of Christ, Lutheran, Presbyterian, Methodist and others. It is a common belief that the camp is spiritual but not denominational. The camp directors/founders describe this phenomena as "we want Catholics to go home better Catholics, Presbyterians to go home better Presbyterians, non-Christians to go home better non-Christians, etc.".

A goal at the camp is to break down barriers to free self-expression. Since campers are ages 10-18, peer pressure influences are particularly strong and these peer pressures can greatly inhibit free expression. Thus, steps are taken to create an environment that rewards genuine sharing and discredits typical peer pressures (i.e. judging others by their clothes, physical appearance, language usage, and racial/ethnic background). Campers typically come to the camp with a set of peer pressure oriented norms that staff seek to dilute. The result is usually a normative vacuum that allows more spiritually oriented value norms to evolve.

The means to this end is a collection of activities that consistently celebrate the worth of each individual. Such activities include songs that everyone can sing, periodic use of a "rule of silence" for time to reflect, daily small discussion groups, at least three spiritual services a day (a morning watch, afternoon chapel, and evening vespers), a Thursday night baptism service, a Friday night awards

ceremony, the informal evolution of nicknames, emphasis on cabin units (all campers live in a cabin with at least one counselor) and classes (hiking, swimming, sports, etc.).

The author has come to define the camp, in academic terms, as a utopian consciousness raising group. The review of literature reveals little regarding this specific type of camp. This is not surprising given the unique development of the camp. However, a relevant perspective can be constructed by focusing on group camping and consciousness raising groups.

Dickey found "that the effects of camping on an individual often include a positive measurable outcome in terms of self-concept...cooperation, ability to deal with stress, and tenacity" (1974, pp. 52-54). Mitchell and Meier see camping as "a unique experience that provides an opportunity for reestablishing our roots, bringing us into harmony with our outdoor heritage, and giving us a perspective beyond that obtained in the narrow confines of a crowded society" (1983, p. 3). "Organized camping", more specifically, is defined "as being comprised of a community of persons living together as an organized, democratic group in an outdoor setting" (Dimrock, 1948, pp. 22-31).

Mitchell and Meier explain "camp life consists of campers and staff who work and live together in small groups" (1983, p. 4). Such a setting would stress, and benefit by, effective teamwork by participants. "There is probably no better opportunity for complete participation in meeting

daily requirements since the camp structure represents a microcosm of a true democratic society. Through this group process campers develop skills in cooperating, sharing, decision making, and assuming leadership & citizenship responsibilities" (Mitchell and Meier, 1983, p. 4).

The benefits of the camp experience are many. Since it is a 24 hour a day experience it affects campers in a variety of ways. Some of these benefits include "learning to accept those different than oneself....learning that flexibility, sharing, and consideration for others are essential for happy group living....reinforcement of good home training....developing deep and lasting friendships with both peers and older persons....and assisting campers to mature by gradually leading them away from any overdependence on their families" (Mitchell and Meier, 1983, p. 25). There are also benefits to be realized when the camp stresses democratic group living. Mitchell and Meier (1983, p. 26) list seven such lessons: "1) learning how the democratic process works....2) understanding and accepting camp rules.... 3) gaining the courage to take an active part in a meeting and to express honest opinions....4) learning to abide by the will of the majority while still having concern for the rights and wishes of the minority....5) learning to get the facts before making a decision....6) learning to bring problems and disputes out into the open....and 7) gaining experience in problem solving."

Since the camp environment is a societal microcosm, and

is usually removed from society, it offers consciousness raising opportunities. Chesebro, Cragan, and McCullough define consciousness raising as a "personal face-to-face interaction which appears to create new psychological orientations for those involved in the process" (1973, p. 136). They say if like-minded people come together to interact upon shared religious value structures there are communication stages that are likely to evolve. There are four such stages.

First, self realization of a new identity. This occurs when individuals share their stories as a form of establishing their identity as part of the group. Second, group identity through polarization. An in-group/out-group recognition is established whereby "non-believers" (those who don't share the beliefs of the group) are acknowledged and the obstacles posed by non-believing out-group individuals are described. Third, establishment of new values by the group. This occurs when the unique values of the in-group are compared to the less desired out-group values and the in-group values are thus reinforced. Fourth, relating to other like-minded groups. This includes relating with groups that share the values of the in-group and have similar ways of knowing (Cragan and Wright, 1980, pp. 196-197).

The aforementioned variables related to group camping and consciousness raising are manifested in the following discussion of the camp under study. This description of group camping and consciousness raising provides a framework

for understanding the camp.

This author first attended the camp in 1966 (during its 11th year). He learned of it because his family belonged to the church that sponsored the camp. He attended the camp eight years as a camper. This is the maximum number of years an individual can attend as a camper (beginning with the summer after fifth grade and ending the summer after 12th grade). Since his last year as a camper (1973) he has participated with the camp each year as a counselor. Thus, the author has had ample opportunity to observe the camp from the perspectives of camper and counselor. Other than the family that founded the camp, he has attended the camp more than any other participant.

Though the camp is inter-denominational, it is strongly rooted in religion. No one denominational perspective is stressed and religious services are generally not led by sanctioned clergy. Spiritual faith is emphasized throughout a typical camp day. Campers participate in a "morning watch" each morning before breakfast. A rule of silence (no talking) is observed during the morning watch. The morning watch offers a period of quiet 10-15 minute reflection, guided by a one page handout with thoughts for the day and recognition of the camp theme.

A different camp theme is created for each week-long camp session. The theme is woven into the camp activities. Camp themes are also stressed through a camp theme song and are featured on the camp t-shirts distributed to all campers

and staff. Past camp themes include "Climb Every Mountain", "Let There Be Peace On Earth (And Let It Begin With Me)", "Reach Out", "Can Do", "Open a New Window, Open a New Door", and "When He Calls Me".

After morning watch, breakfast is preceded by a prayer, frequently offered by a volunteer camper. Mid-morning activities include an hour long discussion group period that will generally include discussion/reflection regarding spiritual faith. Lunch is preceded with a prayer much like the breakfast prayer. Mid-afternoon activities included a 30 minute "chapel" service that usually includes a couple of camp songs, readings (poems, prose, and thoughts) by campers, a main speaker, and a closing prayer. Dinner is preceded with a prayer. There is an early-evening "vespers", much like the afternoon chapel, that usually includes camp songs, readings, a main speaker, a performance by the camp choir, and a closing prayer.

A final worship service may occur during the course of the evening, depending on the scheduled evening activities. At a minimum, the camp day will close with a "friendship circle" where all campers and staff will form a large circle, sing some camp songs, listen to some closing thoughts from the camp directors, and have a closing prayer. When campers return to their cabins for the night, some cabin counselors will lead faith-centered discussions or, at times, Bible readings.

Evening program worship services include the following.

Sunday night features a "Never Walk Alone" service in which first-year campers and counselors are escorted, one at a time by veteran campers, to a large camp fire. The rule of silence is observed and, after a speaker, the camp community sings "You Never Walk Alone". The Thursday night program has two religious services at the lake: 1) a baptism (by immersion in the lake) service and 2) a late evening vesper service. The final night (Friday) culminates with a communion service, usually held outside, that closes the evening. The rule of silence that is observed during the communion service continues to be observed throughout the night until Saturday morning.

The camp session closes Saturday morning with a friendship circle, songs, and closing prayer. Camp Sunday is celebrated the next day at a church back in midwestern city, where most camp participants are from, with members of the camp community leading a worship service. (Pseudonyms are used throughout this report.) This service is usually attended by campers, staff, families and camp participants from previous years.

This author conducted an interview with the camp co-directors and founders, Rush and Patsy Roberts (husband and wife), during the preparation of this article. The interview was done during a late evening "rap session" at camp and focused on their intentions and observations of the camp. The interview was videotaped and has been viewed many times by this researcher. This tape included a number of

references to the role of religion at camp.

Rush and Patsy stress the camp can't teach doctrine because there are too many denominations represented amongst the camp community. A general goal is that we are striving to help all participants to be better people and to respect each other. As stated earlier, they "want Catholics to go home better Catholics, Presbyterians to go home better Presbyterians, non-Christians to go home better non-Christians, etc.". In past years, over 40 churches have been represented at the camp but, this number dropped off during the late 1970's due to declining church attendance in the U.S.

Many of the camp staff are former campers who join the staff after they are too old to attend as campers. Thus, many camp staff have been participating, as campers and staff, over 10-20 years. Rush and Patsy were asked "Why do people keep coming back to camp year after year, especially given the diversity of backgrounds represented at camp? What brings us together?" Rush responded "we each have found a 'spiritual something' at camp...and we come back each year looking for it". Patsy broadens the scope of her interpretation in saying "we're all part of a whole...a family", to the point that even when we're away from camp, we're still there in spirit.

When Rush speculated on Camp 2025 he expressed his belief "something will be going on...maybe not a week-long camp as we know it...but some type of spiritually-centered

group." Thus, religion and a spiritual belief in God (for most people) provide a context for the week at camp.

Related to the spiritual tone of the camp is the utopian atmosphere that is believed to exist and perpetuated by most of the participants. The camp is seen as a retreat from the pressures of American life. Campers and staff come from a wide range of backgrounds and, even with all the diversity, participants come looking for "safe-haven" from the negative pressures of school, family and trying to understand themselves. Campers share their feelings and consistently console one another in a manner that creates an almost surreal camp-wide comfort zone. Dedication to the group and respect for the individual is consistently stressed. Thus, although there are conflicts during the course of the week, the camp is frequently referred to as "heaven on earth", "the way things ought to be" and "my favorite week of the year where I can get away from the world". Thus, this author recognizes the camp as a self-proclaimed utopia.

Rush Roberts acknowledges parents periodically comment their children they drop-off at camp at the beginning of the week are not the same kids they pick-up at the end of the week. Rush says kids "can cry, hug, share, and self-disclose" more in one week than they might during the other 51 weeks of the year. The transition from camp to home can be difficult. Patsy mentioned she usually gets sick to her stomach when she leaves camp. Campers tend to be emotional as they leave on Saturday. The previously mentioned Camp

Sunday, held at a church in mid-western city the day after camp ends, was developed to help camp participants make the transition from camp to home.

A unique confirmation of camp identities occurs with the Friday night Awards Ceremony. On Friday afternoon, camp staff deliberate and vote on recipients of the Camper of the Year, Theme Awards (male and female), Most Improved Campers (male and female), and Rookie of the Year (male and female). Campers vote on the Counselor of the Year Award while staff are deliberating. Patsy Roberts and a selected handful of staff select campers who will receive a wide range of other awards that acknowledge camper behavior during the week. The Awards Ceremony is a very supportive environment with applause and vocal support offered to all award recipients. Not all staff agree with the giving of awards (this author has not participated with award deliberations since 1977) but most staff support the custom.

The Roberts family and their management style adds to the unique camp environment. Rush and Patsy founded the camp in 1956 and their children (Rush Jr., Pam, Jan, and Sissy) were active camp participants in their youth and are on the camp staff. Rush and Patsy are the archetypal father and mother of the camp. Their leadership style is authoritarian and, while they consider staff input, they make it clear they make the final decisions. Since the camp separated from midwestern town community church, and became an independent entity, the camp has been "owned" by Rush and Patsy. If the

camp was a society, they would be defined as benevolent dictators.

There have been staff who have quit coming to camp because of disagreements with Rush and Patsy. Given the intense nature of camp, and the variety of interpretations regarding what camp is and should be, the existence of disagreements should be no surprise. This author believes such disagreements, and the viewpoints that drive them, actually benefit the camp as invigorating influences. Staff disagreements are telling because their resolution, or lack of resolution, shed light on what the camp philosophy is.

A typical conflict, and typical resolution, occurred when this author disagreed with the giving of awards to campers. Rush and Patsy, and most of the staff, strongly support such awards. Resolution evolved when this author ceased to participate in that particular activity (meaning he didn't vote in the awards process). Rush and Patsy will generally exercise flexibility to allow individual freedoms without sacrificing benefits to the group.

Some staff have been asked not to return to camp when their contribution to camp is viewed by the Roberts as being detrimental. This is rare however. One atypical scenario shows how a "renegade counselor" was dealt with.

Lamar Shaw was a camper eight years and had been a counselor for ten years when his camp participation was significantly affected. He was very popular with campers but frequently had differences with other counselors.

Disagreements tended to deal with Lamar being viewed as too loud and not helping to enforce camp rules. Some viewed him as being disruptive but nobody viewed him as being menacing. He was vocal regarding his opposition to some of the camp programming. Some staff were vocal with opinions they'd like to see him not continue to come to camp. He stayed away one year and referenced his absence as occurring because of his differences with the staff (including Rush and Patsy).

When he returned the year after his absence, he was permitted to come to camp on the condition he would work in the kitchen rather than be a cabin counselor. This limited his interaction with campers significantly. This "exile to the kitchen" was never overtly acknowledged by the Roberts, rather it was described as occurring because the kitchen staff needed help. However, the event sent a clear signal to dissenters that too much overt disagreement could result in an assignment in the kitchen (or, of course, the individual could choose not to return to camp). Although Lamar was assigned to the kitchen, another counselor invited him to sleep in his cabin and co-lead a daily discussion group.

Having informal influence at camp is a fickle situation. People who have been at camp a long time have influence due to the knowledge they have of the camp and its history. On the other hand, there are individuals who come to camp the first time and within two days are exercising considerable influence on the behavior of others.

The author has been friends with the Roberts family all

his life. He was a member of the same church during his youth. He has never observed Rush or Patsy abuse their power, their work with youth has consistently been referred to as very impressive, but that they have unchecked authority is evident to staff and staff behavior is subsequently influenced by this. Their dedication to the camp is blatantly evident. They put in many hours to put together a meaningful camp session each year. They are known as leaders who never ask anybody to do anything they wouldn't do themselves.

Their leadership style can best be described as "structured chaos". The camp is held at a state park in a rural setting. With roughly 220 people living actively in such a close but removed environment, the group interaction is naturally chaotic at times. Some staff have sought to organize the camp in a manner in which everybody is fully aware of what is going on and why, but the Roberts have consistently avoided such initiatives.

This author, who used to see their leadership style as a hindrance, has come to see this "structured chaos" approach to be a significant unique aspect of camp life. The last minute planning creates a spontaneity that perpetuates a unique aspect of camp life. The last minute planning creates a spontaneity that perpetuates a unique excitement based on the immediacy of events and degrees of anxiety resulting from the uncertainty of what is going on and why. It should be noted essential aspects of the camp (i.e. food

preparation, health care, and safety) are organized and well planned. It is the camp programming that is chaotic (by design).

The role of camp in the lives of Rush and Patsy is clearly evident. Says Patsy "after my family, camp is the most important thing in my life". Rush is retired but had a successful career as a director of sales at a large private sector company. He attributes most of his success in business to what he's learned running the camp. They consistently praise the staff that volunteers each year.

The consciousness raising climate of camp is nurtured throughout the week. Rush does motivational speaking, mostly with sales related audiences, and conveys his message at camp. A consistent message is "yes you can". Campers are encouraged to take risks and try new things throughout the week. Even small achievements (i.e. eating a food item normally rejected) can be a source of humorous applause. Big achievements start with small achievements. This author, for example, has taught children how to swim who never thought they could swim. The goal is to show them they'll never achieve objectives in life if they don't try. Also, there's nothing wrong with trying something new, even if you fail. There are many former campers, leading successful professional lives, who attribute part of their success to the encouragement they received at camp.

Camp themes typically center around what the individual can do. They are active themes. Campers are challenged

throughout the week to shed assumptions of what they can and can't do. Part of this shedding process requires the dilution of peer pressures that often reinforce self-imposed limitations.

There are a variety of camp activities that indirectly and directly encourage campers to be less concerned with society norms and inhibitions. There are many silly/childish songs that campers and staff sing throughout the week. Often times new campers are hesitant to engage in such singing because it is childish. But, when they see staff and older campers participating, most new campers will begin enthusiastic participation within a day. Campers are humorously "forced" to sing or dance at meal time. Such "performances" are wildly applauded. Thus, inhibiting society norms are dismantled and new, less restrictive, norms are constructed.

This less inhibited environment breeds a unique sharing and intimacy that grows throughout the week. This author can offer an example from his own life. This author is a "low touch" individual. That is, he does not usually touch others in the course of normal day to day interaction. However, at camp, his touching behavior increases significantly. The camp norms promote much touching in the form of hugs, embraces, and pats on the back. The increase of touching is equated with the increase of self-disclosure.

Campers, rather than staff, typically do speaking at religious services throughout the week. Speakers will often

share revealing thoughts they have about themselves and their lives. They receive unconditional support from the camp. This phenomena breeds more and more self-disclosure from speakers throughout the week. This researchers defines these events as a "baring of the souls". The realization that individuals can share their weaknesses, insecurities, dreams and aspirations, and not be ridiculed, has a very positive effect. That they'll receive support from the group is almost intoxicating.

The resulting consciousness raising can, at times, serve as fertile soil for the development of new (or modified) identities. This can occur over a period of years or it can be more immediate, such as with baptism by immersion (held on Thursday at each camp session). This researcher has never seen a dramatic disposition change but has seen many situations where individuals have discovered a vastly enhanced self awareness that leads to an increased self-potential. Campers who take this improved self-concept home with them have not necessarily lost their old identity, rather more often, they've added an identity to their disposition. Campers are encouraged to write a letter to themselves on the last night of camp describing their feelings about the week. The letters are kept by Patsy and mailed to them at Christmas time.

The consciousness raising experience is cultivated by a variety of factors, including the aforementioned effects of religion and utopian atmosphere. The C.A.M.P. logo,

constructing assured & motivated people, underscores the emphasis on consciousness raising. All aspects of camp must be interpreted with regard to this consciousness raising phenomena.

Many of the camp activities are a means to an end, rather than an end in and of themselves. There are a variety of sports classes and outdoor activities (i.e. swimming, fishing & hiking). The goal is not to produce greater athletes or catch big fish, rather it is to provide a climate that promotes fellowship among campers. Each cabin creates a stunt (skit) for Stunt Night. The goal is not to develop acting skills, it is to promote cabin unity and stronger interpersonal relationships. Songs are sung in many of the camp settings throughout a typical camp day. The goal is not to produce excellent singing voices, it is to produce a unified chorus of the collective camp mind.

The camp improves the sense of self and sense of others. The camp, since its inception, has consistently stressed interaction among diverse groups in American society. Diversity exists among campers and staff in areas such as racial & ethnic composition, economic classes, religious background, staff occupations and residential locations (i.e. urban, suburban, & rural). Rush and Patsy actively sought to integrate the camp (racially & ethnically) in the early 1960's by establishing relations with churches with populations different than the home church (Midwestern Town Community Church). The first black person and Jewish person

this author met, as an example, was at camp at age ten.

There is considerable economic diversity among the campers and staff. The camp draws from the very poor and affluent of American society. Campers do not spend money at camp, they are discouraged from bringing money, so money is not an influential factor during the course of the week. The staff works to downplay economic differences among campers. Regarding religious backgrounds, camp participants have included people from a wide variety of religious backgrounds, including atheists. Rush and Patsy consistently invite clergy from varying denominations to come to camp for the week or shorter visits as schedules permit.

Occupational diversity exists among the staff without presenting any obstacles to staff interaction and effectiveness. The staff is comprised of individuals from a wide range of occupational backgrounds (i.e. blue collar, white collar, unemployed, etc.) but manages to work well together during the camp session because the common occupation for the week is "camp counselor". Rush and Patsy consistently acknowledge God and staff as the keys to a successful camp week. Staff are frequently praised throughout each camp session.

The camp has evolved into an event for all ages, although it is specifically geared for campers fifth grade thru 12th grade. As staff members marry (in some cases to other staff members) and have children, they continue to come to camp and help in other ways rather than as camp

counselors (i.e. help in the kitchen, with classes, or special program events). Since their children under age ten are not old enough to be part of the standard camping program, these kids frequently live with their parents in campers, empty cabins, or tents. Since most live in campers, and the campers are located in the parking lot, they are referred to as "parking lot kids" (PLK's). These younger children serve to make the camp session more of a "community," rather than a program-based, camping experience.

The camp folklore is comprised of many "folksy stories". These are stories and remembrances of camp events that Patsy will share from time to time. These evolve primarily due to the spiritual nature of the camp and the utopian atmosphere. the presence of God is frequently referenced by camp participants. The following story exemplifies such a remembrance. In 1969, Sue Lines was the girl theme award winner. The theme was "When He Calls Me" and the theme song, of the same name, stresses we should be responsive to God when he calls us. Five months after winning the award Sue died in a car accident. This event was interpreted by many as God calling Sue home to heaven. The effect of this story, and others, lead many camp participants to believe God is especially present at camp and that camp is unique because of this.

Camp is frequently described as being "special". This author interprets the "specialness" as being linked to the camp environment that allows for interaction relatively free

of societal inhibitions. This allows for the spiritual sense of self to evidence itself and individuals will interact with one another in a uniquely genuine manner. The collective mind of the group is strong. Patsy says she never doubts that the specialness of camp will occur. She and Rush say a quality staff ensures this environment. That is, Rush and Patsy (as camp directors) try to create an environment that allows the staff to shine and the rest comes naturally. They say the total ingredient composition of a successful camp consists of "God, staff, campers, love, program, flexibility and food".

Camp is less a place and more a state of mind. The camp has been held at five locations since 1956 and, while the physical environment of the camp session is important, the camp locations are not necessarily considered to be "sacred ground". The sense of community, and the related interpersonal variables, are the sacred aspects of camp. Patsy points out that each time they moved the camp to a new location they feared they'd lose campers but, each time they moved, the camp population increased.

Rush and Patsy are firm believers in the American free market economic system but they make a concerted effort to diminish the role of money at camp. Campers are instructed not to bring money to camp and, even if they do bring money, there's nothing to buy. Each camper receives, as part of their camp registration fee, a camp t-shirt (with the camp theme on it), a camp photo of the entire group, and a camp

yearbook. The camp yearbook lists names and addresses of all camp participants and also contains camp newspaper issues and the Morning Watch reflection sheets. Thus, interaction of participants is based more on the character of individuals rather than their material possessions.

Since the camp is independent it does not draw campers from any one particular church. Advertising is very limited. A vast majority of new campers (and staff) learn about it by word-of-mouth. News of positive experiences of participants spreads through family networks and neighborhoods. At meal times, this author frequently asks campers how they heard about camp and a vast majority heard about camp via a neighbor, friend, church, or family member. This author can only remember one camper who responded "I saw the advertisement in the local newspaper". There have been years when camp was full and kids were turned away.

When this author prepared to interview Rush and Patsy he composed a list of questions covering a wide range of topics. The first question was "Are kids today different than kids 35 years ago?". They respond that kids today are the same as kids before them but the problems they face are different. Divorce, drugs, and alcohol are more prevalent today and are frequently variables in problems that campers encounter. Rush comments "In 1956 our main objective was to teach swimming 'cos many kids couldn't swim 'cos they didn't have access to a swimming pool". Camp addresses more serious problems today. Patsy acknowledges serious problems existed

then too but they tended to be kept quiet.

Rush and Patsy are adamant in their belief that kids of yesterday and today are similar in that they "want love, discipline, and direction". Once these fundamental objectives are addressed then a foundation has been laid to build from in other areas.

Camp, as a subculture, provides a unique environment within which consciousness raising communication processes allow for growth of the individual via growth of the group. Measuring the effects of this growth is very difficult because, while some changes are immediate, other changes will not occur until much later. Mental seeds can be planted at camp that don't come to fruition until long after the camper has left camp. Understanding the constructs of such a consciousness raising experience is the first step toward the eventual understanding and measurement of the consciousness raising effects. This report is intended as a contribution to that preliminary understanding.

REFERENCES

- Chesebro, J.W; Cragan, J.F. and P. McCullough. "The Small Group Technique of the Radical Revolutionary: A Synthetic Study of Consciousness Raising," Speech Monographs 40 (1973):136-146.
- Cragan, J.F. and D.W. Wright. Communication in Small Group Discussions. New York: West Publishing Co., 1980.
- Dickey, H.L. The Influence of an Outdoor Survival Experience Upon the Self Concept of Adolescent Boys and Girls (Master's Thesis, University of Montana, 1974), pp. 52-54.
- Dimrock, H.S. (ed.) Administration of the Modern Camp. Indianapolis, Indiana: Association Press, 1948, pp. 21-31.
- Mitchell, A.V. and J.F. Meir. Camp Counseling: Leadership and Programming for the Organized Camp. Philadelphia: Saunders College Publishing, 1983.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Davis, R.P. Church Camping. Nashville, Tennessee: Knox Publishing, 1969.

Ensign J. and R. Ensign. Camping Together as Christians. Nashville, Tennessee: Knox Publishing, 1958.

Genne, E. and W. Genne. Church Family Camping and Conferences. Minneapolis, Minnesota: Judson Press, 1979.

MacKay, J. Creative Counseling for Christian Camps. Omaha, Nebraska: Scripture Publishing, 1966.

Purchase, R. and B. Purchase. Let's Go Outdoors With Children. Boston, Massachusetts: Westminster Press, 1972.

Springer, J.C. Boys, Girls and God. Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania: Vantage Press, 1971.